

Working it out – Task 1

Scenario

You have been finding out about flexible working opportunities at your place of work. This is mainly because you would like to reduce your working hours to give you a better work/life balance and spend more time with your child.

Activity:

Writing a 'how-to guide'

Your boss has asked you to write a 'how-to' guide to say how workers can apply for flexible working.

In your guide you should:

- use a suitable format
- explain how people can apply and what they should include in their application
- say why the company may benefit from flexible working
- include any additional information or ideas of your own.

The document contains useful content for the activity. You may choose to select and use any of this material for your writing. You may also use your own ideas to complete this activity.

Marks available: 20

Source Document

Adapted from a Business Link site on flexible working:

Making an application for flexible working



Your **application** must:

- be made in advance
- be in writing
- be dated
- give details of the work pattern you want
- give the date you want to start
- explain the effect on your employer
- state if you have applied before.

Think about what effect any changes will have on your job. You should show that your plans would not harm the business. They may improve it – if so you should say how this could affect your employer in a positive way.

Your employer will decide if your request is right for the business. Employers are required to consider requests in a "reasonable manner". They must notify you of the decision within three months of your request being made.

You are only allowed to apply once a year.

To have the legal right to make a request you have to meet the following **eligibility criteria** although employers can consider requests from those who do not have this right.

To be eligible to make a legal request you must:

- be an employee: agency workers do not qualify
- have worked for your employer continuously for at least 26 weeks
- not have made another request in the past year.

The types of things you can ask for are:

- change the hours you work
- change the times when you work
- work from another place or from home.

Many employers think flexible working makes **good business sense**. For example, it can lead to:

- lower office costs when workers work from home
- staff being happy at work
- fewer days off sick
- better people applying for jobs
- staff staying longer.

Mark scheme used by examiners:

Markers' Briefing Note

Marks in the English Writing component are awarded for 'independent construction of written text to communicate in a purposeful context'. Whilst the learner may use the content of any Source Documents to inform their writing, the Writing Activities do not assess Reading skills. Learners are expected to produce an open response. Depending on the context of the activity, a learner may support either side of an argument, or adopt any well-reasoned stance, using the Source Documents and /or their own ideas and experiences. What should be assessed is their ability to do so whilst meeting all the coverage and range criteria of the Writing Skill Standard.

Writing Activity Writing a 'how-to' guide	Marks	Skill standard assessed
<p>Content:</p> <p>Award 1 mark for each of the following, up to a maximum of 5 marks</p> <p>The guide should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the process of applying for flexible working: 1 mark for a brief explanation, 2 marks for a full account explain how flexible working can benefit employers: 1 mark for a brief explanation, 2 marks for a full account include any further plausible/reasonable information which focuses on the prescribed purpose of the guide: 1 mark 	<p>5 (max)</p>	<p>1.3.1</p> <p>Write clearly and coherently, including an appropriate level of detail.</p>
<p>Structure:</p> <p>Award 1 mark for each of the following, up to a maximum of 2 marks</p> <p>The guide should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have a clear structure with writing organised into appropriate paragraphs use complete sentences to convey information and ideas. 	<p>2 (max)</p>	<p>1.3.2</p> <p>Present information in a logical sequence.</p>

<p>Format and style:</p> <p>Award 1 mark for each of the following, up to a maximum of 4 marks</p> <p>The guide should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have an appropriate headline • set the scene with an introduction and contain an appropriate close • have a format which clarifies the issues such as logical sequence or/and bullet points • contain a suitable tone and vocabulary. 	<p>4 (max)</p>	<p>1.3.3 Use language, format and structure suitable for purpose and audience.</p>
<p>Spelling:</p> <p>Use a 'best fit' policy to award the corresponding mark for one of the bulleted statements. Base the judgement on the notes contained below which identify the particular words/skills desired at Level 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spelling of Level 1 words is almost totally accurate and meaning is clear (there may be one or two lapses). • The spelling of Level 1 words is usually accurate (with at least 75% accuracy). • The spelling of Level 1 words is accurate at least 50% of the time, but there are several lapses. <p>Notes</p> <p>At Level 1, a learner is expected to correctly spell regular, common words used most often in work, studies and daily life such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Words using the <i>-ly</i>, <i>-er</i>, <i>-age</i> suffixes: <i>sincerely</i>, <i>definitely</i>, <i>package</i> ➤ Homophones: <i>four/for</i>, <i>were/we're</i>, <i>meet/meat</i>, <i>write/right</i> ➤ Single vowels plus consonant: <i>future</i>, <i>computers</i> ➤ Two different vowels in the middle of a word: <i>loans</i>, <i>leave</i>, <i>await</i> ➤ Unstressed vowels: <i>separate</i>, <i>restaurant</i>, <i>interesting</i>, <i>library</i> ➤ <i>ie</i> or <i>ei</i> confusions: <i>receive</i>, <i>believe</i> ➤ Pluralising words ending in <i>y</i>, <i>f</i>, <i>fe</i> or <i>o</i>: <i>babies</i>, <i>shelves</i>, <i>libraries</i> <p>(Learners should not be penalised for failing to spell correctly words which are associated with a higher level than Level 1. Zero marks can be awarded if there is no progression from Entry 3).</p>	<p>3 (max)</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1.3.5i Ensure written work includes generally accurate spelling and that meaning is clear.</p>

<p>Punctuation:</p> <p>Use a 'best fit' policy to award the corresponding mark for one of the bulleted statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation is almost totally accurate (i.e. a range of punctuation including full stops, capital letters, commas and question marks is generally used accurately). • A range of punctuation including full stops, capital letters, commas and question marks is used accurately most of the time (i.e. with at least 75% accuracy). • Punctuation is accurate at least 50% of the time (i.e. full stops and capital letters are sometimes used accurately). <p>(Learners should not be penalised for incorrectly using commas and apostrophes usually associated with Level 2. Zero marks can be awarded if there is no progression from Entry 3).</p>	<p>3</p> <p>(max)</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1.3.5ii</p> <p>Ensure written work includes generally accurate punctuation and that meaning is clear.</p>
<p>Grammar:</p> <p>Use a 'best fit' policy to award the corresponding mark for one of the bulleted statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grammar is almost totally accurate, (i.e. subject-verb agreement, consistent use of tenses and pronouns; any errors stand out as untypical or 'one-off' mistakes). • The grammar is accurate at least 75% of the time, (i.e. subject-verb agreement and consistent use of tenses and pronouns, although there may be some errors). • The grammar is at least 50% accurate, (i.e. there may be some basic grammatical errors in e.g. subject-verb agreement or consistency of tenses). 	<p>3</p> <p>(max)</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>1.3.4</p> <p>Use correct grammar, including correct and consistent use of tense.</p>
<p>Total marks available</p>	<p>20</p>	

Learner response:

Learner A

flexible working hours are great because...

- 1. the buisness could stay open longer.*
- 2. open the buisness early so you could get more customers.*
- 3. it would make it a happy working enviroment.*
- 4. it would make employees happy witch will make them want to work.*
- 5. employees would feel comfortable and confident if speaking to the employer.*

your employees will benifit from the felxible working hours because...

- 1. it would allow parents that are unable to work because off childcare to go back to work.*
- 2. it would relieve staff off stress as they would be avoiding traffic.*
- 3. employees who have access to the internet/email would be able to work from home.*
- 4. it would give employees some control over there work/life pattern.*
- 5. employees would recieve there answer with in 28 days if not befor hand.*

Examiner comment:

Learner A - Marks awarded

Content:

- explain a *brief* account of the process of applying for flexible working (0), gives a *full* account of the process of applying for flexible working (0)
- explains *briefly* how flexible working can benefit employers (1), gives a *full* account of how flexible working can benefit employers (0)
- includes any further plausible/reasonable information which focuses on the prescribed purpose of the guide (0)

Content total: 1

Structure:

- has a clear structure with writing organised into appropriate paragraphs (1)
- uses complete sentences to convey information and ideas (0)

Structure total: 1

Format and style:

- has an appropriate headline (1)
- sets the scene with an introduction and contains an appropriate close (0)
- has a format which clarifies the issues such as logical sequence or/and bullet points (1)
- contains a suitable tone and vocabulary (1)

Format and style total: 3

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

- Spelling: **1** (Not counting repeated errors, the percentage of Level 1 spelling errors is still quite high in relation to the word count).
- Punctuation: **2** (There is a lack of capital letters and matching full-stops).
- Grammar: **3**

SPAG total: 6

Total mark: 11

Overall comment

The learner has provided a sufficient response in terms of quantity and has gained marks for format and style but they have failed to address the brief properly, concentrating on the advantages of flexible working and ignoring the process of application.

Learner response:

Learner B

Guide on flexible working

Flexible working can help out you and your employer in many ways, so dont hesitate to apply. First things first, you are more likely to be exepcted for flexible working if you have children under 17 or expecting a child. Also if you have a disabled child under 18. This also applies for adult care, foster perents, mothers/fathers, gurdain or married to any of thoses.

When you apply for this it must be in written form e.g a letter. Dont forget to enter all the things that are nessasery for you to apply. You need to state the date witch you have made the request and if you have made this request befor. Make sure you explain the working patten you are looking for, along with the date you would like to start this patten.

When you have the application you need to arrange a meeting with 28 days or you will be braking the law. Remember to arragne a good time to suit you and your employer. When you have both spoken about your flexible working patten, you need to inform them of your dission with 14 day. If you wasnt happy with the out come ask for a nother meeting to discuse some other possible out comes. If the application can not be accepted the employer must wright to you with the legitimate business reasons for this.

I would strongly advice you to not only say how this would benefit you and your family but how it will benefit the employers them self. How it will save them office cost if you was to work from home. That in the future it could make it a more dynamic workplace and so on.

Examiner comment:

Learner B - Marks awarded

Content:

- explains a *brief* account of the process of applying for flexible working (1), gives a *full* account of the process of applying for flexible working (1)
- explains *briefly* how flexible working can benefit employers (1), gives a *full* account of how flexible working can benefit employers (0)
- includes any further plausible/reasonable information which focuses on the prescribed purpose of the guide (1)

Content total: 4

Structure:

- has a clear structure with writing organised into appropriate paragraphs (1)
- uses complete sentences to convey information and ideas (1)

Structure total: 2

Format and style:

- has an appropriate headline (1)
- sets the scene with an introduction and contains an appropriate close (0)
- has a format which clarifies the issues such as logical sequence or/and bullet points (1)
- contains a suitable tone and vocabulary (1)

Format and style total: 3

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

- Spelling: **1** (There are far too many errors for a good spelling mark. Obvious typos, like 'working' and 'arragne' have been ignored, but at Level 1 learners are expected to do better than 'befor' and 'patten').
- Punctuation: **3** (There are some punctuation errors but they are not in sufficient number or variety to incur a penalty).
- Grammar: **3** (The same is true for grammar and most of the mistakes here concern missing words)

SPAG total: 7

Total mark: 16

Overall comment

The learner has provided an ample response in terms of quantity for Level 1 and the functionality is good.

Learner response:

Learner C

A GUIDE TO FLEXIBLE WORKING.**WHO THE GUIDE IS FOR.**

This guide is specifically aimed at people who have commitments that only allow them to work a set amount of hours per week. Such as people with children who can only work around school hours, students looking for work around their university studies or people who can only generally work a set amount of hours a week due to disabilities.

WHO CAN APPLY.

To apply for flexible working hours there is a set criteria that you must meet, you must either be a mother, father, adopter, guardian, foster parent or a carer. You must also be an employee for the company and not an agency worker, You are required to have worked for the company at least 26 weeks any less and you're exempt and finally applications can only be made once every 12 months.

HOW TO APPLY AND WHAT TO INCLUDE.

To apply for flexible working hours you must request it from your employer in formal writing. Make sure the letter is dated and explain exactly what work pattern would suit your need, it is also very important that you give the date you would like to start the shift change and include if you have applied before.

EFFECTS ON THE BUSINESS.

There are many benefits to flexible working shifts such as, longer opening hours, productivity of the staff, Improved attitude towards work, fewer days off sick and lower office costs.

Examiner comment:

Learner C - Marks awarded

Content:

- explains a *brief* account of the process of applying for flexible working (1), gives a *full* account of the process of applying for flexible working (1)
- explains *briefly* how flexible working can benefit employers (1), gives a *full* account of how flexible working can benefit employers (1)
- includes any further plausible/reasonable information which focuses on the prescribed purpose of the guide (1)

Content total: 5

Structure:

- has a clear structure with writing organised into appropriate paragraphs (1)
- uses complete sentences to convey information and ideas (1).

Structure total: 2

Format and style:

- has an appropriate headline (1)
- sets the scene with an introduction and contains an appropriate close (0)
- has a format which clarifies the issues such as logical sequence or/and bullet points (1)
- contains a suitable tone and vocabulary (1)

Format and style total: 3

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

- Spelling: 3
- Punctuation: 3
- Grammar: 3

SPAG total: 9

Total mark: 19

Overall comment

A very functional piece of writing in terms of content, structure, format and style. The learner has also provided an impressive response in terms of length. There are a few SPAG errors but not sufficient at Level 1 to impose deductions, especially taking into consideration the amount of text written.